

Palestinian leadership to pursue a peace agreement with Israel through direct negotiations, as they have demonstrated their willingness to do before.

Lasting peace is possible only if an agreement is accepted by the Israeli and Palestinian people—it must not be forced on either side. I have continually shared this message with my colleagues in Congress and the international community, most recently by urging members of the European Union to stand with the U.S. and Israel in opposing Palestine's unilateral action at the United Nations.

All citizen in the region deserve a peaceful and prosperous future and I am hopeful progress will be made. However, the U.S. will not ignore the serious security threat that faces Israel. The path to peace lies in working together, not exploiting differences. I will stand with Israel to support peace through direct negotiations and urge Palestine to embrace this approach.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE GRAND  
OPENING OF THE BLIND REHA-  
BILITATION UNIT AT THE  
CLEVELAND VETERAN AFFAIRS  
MEDICAL CENTER

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 23, 2011*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the grand opening of the new Blind Rehabilitation Center at the Louis Stokes Cleveland Veteran Affairs Medical Center, VAMC, on September 26, 2011.

The Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center is dedicated to the quality care of all veterans. It is the fifth largest VA in the country and serves close to 95,000 veterans annually. The Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center was the first VA to receive disease specific accreditation for Inpatient Diabetes Care in 2007 and has also received a special commendation by the American College of Surgeons as a Certified Comprehensive Cancer Program.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, there are approximately 157,000 Veterans who are legally blind and more than one million more suffer from low vision. On September 26, 2011, the Cleveland VAMC will celebrate the grand opening of their new Blind Rehabilitation Center, BRC. The 28,000 square-foot, 15-inpatient-bed BRC will care for blind and low-vision Veterans from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, West Virginia and Kentucky. In addition to working with Veterans to regain their independence and quality of life, the BRC will offer support to the Veterans' families, helping them better understand visual impairment and providing support that will reduce caregiver burden.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in recognizing the grand opening of the Louis Stokes Cleveland Veteran Affairs Medical Center's new Blind Rehabilitation Center.

SUPPORT OF NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH FROM SEPTEMBER 15-OCTOBER 15, 2011, RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL ALFRED RASCON AND THE 41 MEN OF HISPANIC HERITAGE WHO HAVE BEEN AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR

**HON. ROSCOE G. BARTLETT**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 23, 2011*

Mr. BARTLETT. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month, I want to salute Army Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Rascon of Laurel, Maryland, one of the 41 men of Hispanic heritage who have received our military's highest award for valor, the Medal of Honor.

Alfred Rascon was born in Mexico, but joined the Army after graduating from high school in California. He explained, "I volunteered to join the military and serve in Vietnam [before I became a citizen] because I was always an American in my heart."

While serving as a medic, Rascon's reconnaissance platoon came under fierce enemy attack in thick jungle on March 16, 1966. Rascon repeatedly used his own body as a shield against withering fire and saved the lives of two wounded buddies and tried in vain to save the life of a third. Despite wounds from gunfire, shrapnel and a grenade explosion in his face, he raced into a hail of bullets and recovered an M-60 machine gun and ammunition. That action turned the tide of the encounter and may well have saved the lives of his entire platoon. Rascon refused evacuation before other injured buddies.

Alfred Rascon served two more combat tours in Vietnam and also served additional tours since 2001 in Iraq and Afghanistan. He continues to serve our country speaking to our youth. America is blessed by generations of immigrant Medal of Honor recipients like Alfred Rascon. They are heroes who sacrificed themselves to save the lives of others and put their newly adopted country above their own self-interest. There is no greater love than a man lay down his life for a friend.

HONORING BRETT EVERETT WOOD

**HON. THADDEUS G. MCCOTTER**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 23, 2011*

Mr. MCCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Brett Everett Wood, a courageous and noble soldier, who died on September 9, 2011 at the age of 19. Army Private First Class Wood laid down his life when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan.

A 2010 graduate of Owen Valley High School who enlisted shortly after his high school graduation, Private Wood was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division based in Fort Wainwright, Alaska. Private First Class Wood had recently returned to active duty after recovering from head wounds suffered in a previous IED blast.

He was awarded a Purple Heart, Bronze Star and a Good Conduct Medal among several other military honors.

A hard worker, a proud and brave American, and a loving son, Private First Class Brett Wood leaves behind his beloved parents, Malissa and Chris Frye and Mitchell and Angela Wood. He is survived by his adored brothers Nikk Wood, Brandon Wood and Cory Poland and dearly loved sister Amber Poland. His grandparents, Charles and Evelyn Wood and Jim and Sandy Corns will long remember him.

Private First Class Brett Wood made the ultimate sacrifice for his country in Operation Enduring Freedom. To his fellow soldiers, his family and friends, and to everyone who knew and loved him, he was a dedicated member of his community who answered the higher calling to serve his country.

Mr. Speaker, during his lifetime, Brett Everett Wood enriched the lives of everyone around him by employing energy, leadership, and courage in everything he set out to do. As we bid farewell to this exceptional individual, I am reminded that freedom does indeed exact a heavy price and I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering and honoring his contributions and years of devoted service to his community and our country.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF CHINA—OR TAIWAN

**HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 23, 2011*

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, October 10 marks the 100th Anniversary of The Republic of China—or Taiwan. I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing this important occasion.

The partnership between the United States and Taiwan is vital within the international community. Both of our countries benefit from a robust trading relationship, and the support that Taiwan has shown the United States in times of need cannot be overlooked.

In recognizing the centennial of Taiwan, we are also recognizing the numerous cultural and political accomplishments of this proud nation. Within Taiwan, we see a flourishing democracy—where free speech and political discourse are encouraged—and applaud the perseverance of those who have worked to protect the civil rights of the Taiwanese people.

I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the accomplishments Taiwan has made over the past 100 years, and that we will all continue to foster the important relationship that exists between the United States and one of our most important Asian allies.

TRANSPARENCY IN REGULATORY  
ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS ON THE  
NATION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

**HON. STENY H. HOYER**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 22, 2011*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under